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IS POLITICAL EXTREMISM WITHIN THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
A THREAT THAT CAN BE MANAGED?

BY

COLONEL ALEX BERGENTHAL, GERMAN ARMY

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Using authentic source material such as investigations conducted by the German military counterintelligence service, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- o Has the number of political extremists serving in the federal armed forces increased over the last years?

- o Which movement is considered to be more dangerous--the leftwing extremists or the rightwing? What are the objectives of the different groupings?

- o What kind of legal rulings are available against the extremist soldiers?

- o Does the problem require any immediate countermeasures?

Focused on the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany the paper could serve as a study subject for other armed forces.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

IS POLITICAL EXTREMISM WITHIN THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
A THREAT THAT CAN BE MANAGED?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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13 March 1990

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany both identified and unidentified members of extremist political parties perform their service. The German armed forces, being an "army of draftees" are often called a mirror of the German society. In this sense they cannot prevent that draftees include young people with a radical conviction in much the same percentages as they are found in the overall population. In addition, there are some political groupings that select a few supporters who are especially committed to the cause: They "dispatch" them to the armed forces with the objective of either corrupting the morale of the forces or of acquiring specialized military knowledge and skill while serving in the forces.

The questions being asked here have a significant impact on the inner state of the armed forces and at the same time on the security of the Federal Republic:

- o Is the number of political extremists serving in the Federal Armed Forces increasing--depending on the political scenery in Germany? (i.e., growing Republican party).
- o Are the legal conditions and restrictions concerning the political activity of soldiers sufficient and effective?
- o Can the extremist elements accomplish their activities undiscovered and will they use their military knowledge one day against the armed forces?
- o Finally, is the problem indeed so serious that it requires any countermeasures?

As far as I know this study provides the first comprehensive summary of the evolution and trends of extremist activity in the Federal Armed Forces of Germany. As a former Chief of Staff of the German Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD), I am in the fortunate position to have at my disposal high-class and unpublished source material. This makes it possible to give a very clear answer to the questions listed above.

I am convinced that the German example can serve as a study subject for other armed forces.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

WHO IS AN EXTREMIST?

Political extremism and anticonstitutionalism must be one homogenous whole in the Federal Republic of Germany. Activities or endeavors are considered anticonstitutional on the part of individuals, or groups of persons, political parties, or other types of organizations, when there are unequivocal indications that their objectives are, in whole or in part, contradictory to the basic existence of the free and democratic fundamental order.

The basic existence of the "free and democratic fundamental order" has been defined by the Federal Constitutional Court, in a basic ruling in connection with the banning of the SRP (Socialist Reich Party) in 1953: The respect for the human rights, the division of power, the accountability of the government, the independence of the courts, and the multi-party principle, all of which have been specifically addressed in the "Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany" promulgated on 23 May 1949, may, in this context, be used to exemplify this basic existence.¹ Anticonstitutional endeavors will not be discussed inasmuch as these are of no consequence as far as this paper is concerned. It is the exclusive right of the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior to ascertain whether groups of persons and/or organizations, and parties are involved in the pursuit of anticonstitutional objectives, and must, therefore, be classified as being extremist. To further illustrate this point, it should be mentioned that anyone is considered an extremist who, pursuant to conclusive information, has become a member of an extremist organization. Members are also who identify in some other way with the objectives of the organization, and advocate them. The latter is of

considerable significance with respect to those organizations where no definite outward evidence exists, such as a membership identification record, or proof of payment of fixed membership dues, which can be used as a confirmation to verify or substantiate such membership.

EXTREMISTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

It was both in 1971 under a social-liberal administration, and in 1987 under a Christian-liberal leadership that the Federal Government in power made it quite clear that, if at all possible, it wanted to keep the civil service, and thus the German Federal Armed Forces, free of extremists, both applicants, and those already in the employ of the German government.² Consequently, there should hardly be any extremists holding positions with the armed forces--both the German Federal Armed Forces, and the German Federal Armed Forces Administration. On the other hand, the German Federal Armed Forces describe themselves as an "army of draftees" since draftees make up a proportionate share of approximately 200,000 soldiers performing basic military service per year. If they want to see themselves as a "reflection of the population," it is inevitable that, as far as political extremism in the armed forces is concerned, they will also find political extremists in their own ranks.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ARMED FORCES

In the Federal Republic of Germany, members of the armed forces have the right to vote, and seek election. Thus, the entire spectrum of political parties in the Federal Republic of Germany--to include the extremist parties, both the political Right, and the Left--is available to choose from, both in elections, and in regard to memberships and/or other activities. Taking this into account, it would be unrealistic to assume that soldiers would not avail

themselves of these options. How exactly this is done, and what consequences ensue, will be explained in the illustrations set forth below.

ENDNOTES

1. Ministry of the Interior of the FRG, Report on the Protection of the Constitution for 1974, Bonn, July 1975.

2. Bundestag (House of the German Federal Parliament), several Official Reports of 1971 and 1987.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LOYALTY TO THE CONSTITUTION WITHIN THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES

THE "CITIZEN IN UNIFORM"

Designing the legal status of the soldier--as intended by those who established the German Federal Armed Forces--was supposed to ensure, particularly with respect to their civil rights, that there would be an "absolute renunciation of the past."¹ It was the intention to define the legal status of the soldier in such a manner that it corresponded to the free and democratic fundamental order of this nation.² The designers realized, however, that the law can only serve as a precondition for the free and democratic spirit to prevail within the German Federal Armed Forces. Taking the existing legal preconditions as a basis, those in charge of administration, and command and control should make it their duty to put the lawmaker's intention into practice.³ In the final analysis, it is only that soldier who could do full justice to his task while rendering his daily duty;⁴ who stood on the firm ground of the democratic fundamental order, and who exemplified and conveyed the high value attached to the law, and freedom.

In sharp contrast to the views held so far, the creators of the new armed forces did not want an uncritical soldier. The "citizen in uniform" was supposed to be aware of his responsibility vis-a-vis the political order.⁵ It was not "blind obedience" which the soldier was expected to display, but "loyalty entailing criticism."⁶ Count Baudissin, the designer of the concepts of "military leadership," and of the "citizen in uniform" expressed doubts, whether holding positions in the public service (with regular soldiers, and military personnel on extended duty terms being considered public servants) could be brought into agreement with supporting and

advocating extremist political views.⁷ A radical rejection of government and society, and an inclination towards violence would be inconsistent with being involved in the peace issue.

This concept was taken yet one step further by Ulrich de Maiziere who, just like Count Baudissin, is one of the personalities who has left a decisive mark on the German Federal Armed Forces:

Anyone who decided to reject the totalitarian claims to power--and this decision had, in the final analysis, resulted in the establishment of the German Federal Armed Forces--would have to have something better to offer that could be held against the totalitarian concept.⁸

The clearest difference between the democratic way of thinking and that of the Communists, and rightwing extremists was the way we viewed the human being. Our concept of the human being did not permit us to turn young men into immature tools of omnipotent superiors. Our soldiers were supposed to make the experience, both on duty, and in their private lives, that the concepts of freedom, and justice are taken seriously.

THE ETHICAL LINK TO THE BASIC LAW

These values, even today, are an inherent part of the official position, as formulated by Dr. Woerner, the former Federal Minister of Defense, when he addressed a group of officers in 1983:

The soldier is supposed to find out that the order of values as established by the Basic Law, and the fundamental rights of the democratic citizen also exist within the German Federal Armed Forces. Being involved in party-political activities of whatever kind, however, has no place within the armed forces. The German Federal Armed Forces are not an armed force of some political party, but of our democratic state, and of the entire people. As a matter of fact, any soldier has the right, while off duty, to form his own political opinion, or to join any political party. The image of an officer is defined while realizing that there is a "definite ethical link to the Basic Law." Through his own conduct, an officer would be capable not only of making a contribution

toward conveying an impression of the image of an officer, but would also have an influence on the attitude of many citizens vis-a-vis the government. Thus, much was left to the officers to strengthen the will to preserve and defend our liberal principles of life.⁹

THE PRINCIPLES OF TRADITION

The historical dimension of the loyalty to the constitution within the armed forces of the German democracy is exemplified in the "Ten Principles of Tradition" which were published by Hans Apel, who was Dr. Woerner's predecessor as the Minister of Defense, in the "White Paper 1979":¹⁰

Tradition in the Bundeswehr cannot be anything except what is justified under the constitution. The Basic Law is the touchstone. Tradition in the Bundeswehr must be leavened with the spirit of the constitution. Faithfulness, steadfastness, devotion to duty, military prowess achieve moral value and political weight only when they are harnessed to higher goals, and to the men of the Bundeswehr such goals are peace, liberty, and the rule of law.

It is this historical context in which loyalty to the constitution within the German Federal Armed Forces must be understood. Freedom, human dignity, and equal rights could not be taken for granted in former German armed forces, not within government or society. They must be a matter of course in the armed forces of the free and democratic state. Even the individual soldier must be able to rely on his rights as a citizen not being restricted beyond what is permitted by the constitution.

ENDNOTES

1. Bundestag (House of the German Federal Parliament), Official Document, 2. Period 1700, Bonn 1955, p. 16.

2. Bundestag, Parliamentary Committee of Defense, Official Document, 2. Period 2140, Bonn 1955, p. 2.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Baudissin, "Soldat fuer den Frieden," p. 195.

6. Ibid., p. 50.

7. Ibid.

8. DeMaiziere, "Bekenntnis Zum Soldaten," p. 57.

9. Manfred Woerner, Zum Bild des Offiziers, Soldat und Technik, 1983, p. 407 ff.

10. The Federal Minister of Defense, "White Paper 1979," p. 196, ff.

CHAPTER IV
THE LEGAL SITUATION

THE RESTRICTION OF BASIC RIGHTS OF THE SOLDIERS

In reviewing the possibilities and limits and members of the German Federal Armed Forces to engage in political activities, the legal situation must be considered. This includes the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Act of the Legal Status of Military Personnel as well as the decrees issued by the Federal Ministry of Defense. Let me cite the following example:

The soldier has the same civil rights as any other citizen. Within the scope of the requirements occasioned by the performance of military service, his rights are restricted by his duties as prescribed by the law.¹

This fundamental restriction of basic rights imposed on soldiers has been considered by the Federal Constitutional Court, and by renowned members of the legal profession² as being in conformance with the constitution. It has been justified as follows:

From the special relationship of force, and duty of the soldier, the constitutional demand must be derived providing for a restriction of the civil rights of the soldiers to such an extent that it is ensured that an armed force with appropriate defense preparedness is available for national defense.³

"Thus restricting the free and democratic rights of a soldier is not accomplished as an end in itself; rather, this must be accepted with a view to the defense mission to be realized."⁴ The exclusive reason for this is that the legal asset, for the protection of which the right to freely express one's opinion is being restricted, must be ranked higher in value than the right to express one's opinion.

This has to take second place in those instances where exercising the right to express one's opinion would result

in a violation of higher-ranking interests in need of protection. The external security of the Federal Republic of Germany is considered to be such a high-ranking legal asset.⁵

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

What is especially effected is engaging in political activities. Such kind of activities are restricted by Article 15 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act. It, essentially provides that the soldier:

- o Is not permitted while in the performance of duty to engage in any activities in favor of, or to the disadvantage of, any particular political movement (Article 15, Paragraph 1 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act);

- o Is required to conduct himself, within the official accommodations and installations, in such a manner that the duty related activities are not seriously interfered with (Article 15, Paragraph 2 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act);

- o Is not permitted to engage in any propaganda activities on behalf of a particular group (Article 15, Paragraph 2 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act);

- o Is not permitted--being a military superior--to exert any influence, in a political sense, on the personnel under his command (Article 15, Paragraph 4 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act);

- o Is not permitted to wear a uniform when attending political rallies (Article 15, Paragraph 3 of the Legal Status of the Military Personnel Act).

MEMBERSHIP IN RADICAL PARTIES

Finally, the legal situation must be considered unequivocal in the case, where armed forces' members join so-called "radical" parties.

"It is the soldier's duty to recognize the free and democratic basic order within the meaning of the Basic Law, and to advocate its preservation through his overall conduct."⁶ Scherer elaborates in this connection, "Advocating a free and democratic basic order makes it incumbent upon the soldier to take positive action."⁷ It is this duty that prohibits a soldier from becoming a member of a party, the program of which is incompatible with the Basic Law. "Engaging in political activities of any nature invariably will have to be based on recognizing the free basic order."⁸ At this point I want to stress the incompatibility of military duty, and membership in a party which is not democratic-minded:

Subversive activities within the meaning of left or right-wing radicalism in which forbidden parties engage cannot be tolerated, and constitute a violation of the official duties. Expressing demoralizing criticism of the basic order of our government, and calumniating and ridiculing its institutions is irreconcilable with the soldier's mission.⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Legal Status of Military Personnel Act, 1969, p. 6.
2. Maunz-Durig-Herzog, Basic Law, Muenchen 1978, p. 398.
3. Lingens, Eric, The Basic Right of the Soldier, Report Dok Zent Bw, Nr. 65682, p. 298.
4. Ibid., p. 925.
5. Maunz-Durig-Herzog, p. 412.
6. Legal Status of Military Personnel Act, p. 8.
7. Scherer Werner, Soldatengesetz und Vorgesetztenverordnung, Muenchen 1971, p. 59.

8. Ilseemann, Gero von, Die Bundeswehr in der Demokratie, Hamburg 1971, p. 180.

9. Ibid., p. 180.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN THE ARMED FORCES

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The constitutional prerequisites for establishing the armed forces were only created by amendments to the Basic Law passed on 26 March 1954 and 19 March 1956.¹ At this point in time, the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany had already gathered their first experiences in dealing with political extremists, and had given extremist political parties their first blunt rebuff. Let me illustrate this fact by citing the election results of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) before it was banned by the Federal Constitutional Court in August 1956. It was three years before it was banned that, during the elections for the 2nd German "Bundestag" (Federal Diet) which we held in September 1953, it had received a mere 2.2 percent of the votes cast--as compared to 5.7 percent during the election for the 1st German Federal Diet held on 14 August 1949.² The extreme Right had also developed to the point of total insignificance--in this instance, a political party, namely the Socialist Reich Party, had been declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1952, and had thus been banned.³ At the time of their establishment the armed forces encountered an ambience which was practically free of extremists, at least as far as the political party environment is concerned.

As far as political extremism and its effect on the armed forces is concerned, there are three events since 1952 that have a bearing on the discussion of this subject. First, the founding of the right-wing extremist NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) in 1954. Second, the readmittance of a Communist party, the DKP (German Communist Party) in 1969, and third, the

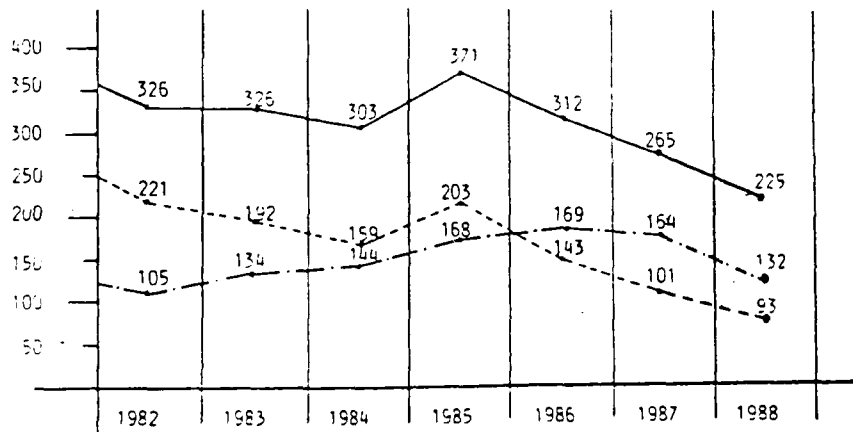
emergence of parties and organizations which felt that they were independent of the orthodox, "Moscow-controlled" communism, and pursued the objective of establishing a socialist-communist rule, or anarchy (the so-called new Left). Of these extremist organizations, it was only the National Democratic Party of Germany that was able to show some short-lived, noticeable success. This, among other things, found its expression in the fact that it managed, if only temporarily, to become a member of several Land parliaments. From the mid-sixties to the early seventies, the National Democratic Party of Germany had its sympathizers, voters, and, in individual instances, even representatives from amongst the ranks of the members of the armed forces, to include the German Federal Armed Forces Administration. Thus, both members of the armed forces, and civilian employees of the German Federal Armed Forces were engaged in political activities, both on the local and the regional level, on behalf of the National Democratic Party of Germany. However, this "intermediate high" of rightwing extremism did not have any effects on the armed forces.⁴ What did become apparent was that the armed forces do not remain unaffected by political extremism. This is especially true if, skillfully wrapped, it jumps over a certain acceptance threshold existing within the population, and thus, seemingly, acquires a political legitimacy. In the past the German Federal Armed Forces have turned out to be, in their attitude vis-a-vis extremist phenomena, the otherwise welcome "reflection of public opinion." This is true at least as far as rightwing extremism is concerned. Any speculations on how the armed forces would react with respect to similar successes on the part of leftwing extremist organizations cannot be substantiated empirically.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

From the preceding illustrations, it appears that extremist endeavors within the German Federal Armed Forces can be confined to the areas of rightwing extremism--with some variations requiring further clarification--as well as orthodox communism, and the new Left. Since rightwing extremism has changed with the events in the Soviet Union and its effects on orthodox communism in the Federal Republic of Germany, and since the parties of the "new Left" have stagnated I feel that describing the developments during the last five years will be sufficient.

EXTREMISTS IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE GERMAN FEDERAL ARMED FORCES

(Overall figures from 1982 to 1988)⁵



Total —————
Leftwing Extremists - - - - -
Rightwing Extremists - - - - -

Rightwing Extremists

During the past five years, the overall number of members of the German Federal Armed Forces who have been identified as being rightwing extremists has changed only very slightly. Also the number of rightwing extremists identified within the German Federal Armed Forces was not substantially higher

than in other spheres of the civil service. In its Report on the Protection of the Constitution for 1987,⁶ the following figures are listed by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution:

German Federal
Armed Forces: 40 out of approximately 470,000 (without draftees)

German Federal
Postal Service: 37 out of approximately 540,000

German Federal
Railway: 19 out of approximately 280,000

A survey taken in February 1989 revealed that there were 43 members of the German Federal Armed Forces who were rightwing extremists.⁷ They break down into the following categories:

- o 3 Staff Officers
- o 6 Senior NCO's (two of whom are regulars)
- o 13 Junior NCO's
- o 10 Enlisted Men
- o 1 Civil Servant
- o 5 White-collar Employees
- o 5 Blue-collar Workers

Of these 43 rightwing extremists, 4 Junior NCO's and 3 Enlisted men are members of so-called neo-Nazi organizations.

There is no typical behavioral pattern which is exhibited by rightwing extremists within the German Federal Armed Forces. On the one hand, lacking a uniform, self-contained ideology, and on the other hand, depending on the status and situation of the identified rightwing extremist the conduct is found to range from clearly professing membership all the way to resigning, or an ostensible disassociation from the objectives of the organization. It is,

for instance, common practice on the part of the National Democratic Party of Germany to issue resignation certificates to members of the German Federal Armed Forces in order to spare them any official adversities.⁸

What all rightwing extremists have in common are nationalistic and neutralistic endeavors which result in a rejection of NATO, as well as reservations with respect to the integration of the German Federal Armed Forces into NATO. Anyone who is a rightwing extremist by conviction is, therefore, continuously, faced with a conflict of loyalty.

In critical situations, at times of unrest, or on "Day X," confirmed rightwing extremists find that "two souls dwell in their breasts." Inevitably, they are bound to face a conflict in such instance where the democratic constitutional state requires them to perform certain actions which are inconsistent with their ideological basic principles.

It is only with respect to a small number of rightwing extremists that this conflict of loyalty results in efforts and activities which are directed against the German Federal Armed Forces. This is particularly true in the case of the neo-Nazis who are ideologically settled, more fanatic, and prepared to resort to violence, and who, in most instances, are draftees. Examples that can be cited are isolated instances of conscientious objection, refusals to take the requests for early discharges, theft of weapons and ammunition, or uninhibited propagating of rightwing extremist ideas amongst fellow soldiers.

This manner exhibited by rightwing extremists in the German Federal Armed Forces constitutes the exception. As a general rule, the rightwing extremist performs his duty satisfactorily and is, not infrequently, considered to be a good soldier by his superiors.⁹

The concept of an "antimilitaristic struggle," as seen by the leftwing extremists is unknown to rightwing extremist organizations. As a general rule they do not jeopardize military security, the protection of military secrets, or the operational readiness of the forces. On the contrary, they identify with anything military, and, as indicated earlier, they are--at least in the formal sense--particularly good soldiers in many instances.¹⁰ Nevertheless, there are three aspects which must be taken into account when dealing with confirmed rightwing extremists, and especially in the case of those who possess the intellectual and rhetoric capability to argue opinions and views of their organizations with respect to the so-called "basic issues of the people," as well as current events:

o First: Just like leftwing extremists,--even if, partly, for different reasons--rightwing extremists reject this government and its institutions, and thus also the German Federal Armed Forces. It is their conviction that this government is not their government. The rightwing extremist member of the German Federal Armed Forces does not offer any guarantee that he will observe the duty of allegiance of the civil servant,¹¹ the principles of which, as held by the Federal Administrative Court, are applicable to members of the German Federal Armed Forces. Accordingly,

The duty of allegiance not only calls for acceptance of the government, and its constitutional order in operation, but particularly requires a definite disassociation from groups and efforts that criticize, oppose, or defame this government, its constitutional bodies, and the constitutional order in force.¹²

In all those instances where a member of the German Federal Armed Forces advocates the objectives of his rightwing extremist organization he is faced with a conflict of loyalty because they are classified as being anticonstitutional by the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior.¹³

o Second: Even though, on the face of it, rightwing extremists do not constitute a threat to military security, I would recommend not to disregard the conceivable long-term effect: A rightwing extremist who is assigned duty as a military leader or as an instructor within one of the Officer Schools, and/or the Federal Armed Forces Universities, has the opportunity to indoctrinate soldiers who have been entrusted to him, in accordance with his own--extremist--political way of thinking. In certain interface areas--particularly in those instances where the pedagogic and educational mission assumes a special significance--rightwing extremists may have the effect of multipliers. No such threat emanates from leftwing extremists. In their case, the proportionate share of those who have enlisted for extended terms--i.e., the category of persons who would qualify for key positions--is negligible. On a long-term basis it is possible for the rightwing extremists by means of political indoctrination to adversely affect the operational readiness of forces, and--consequently--military security. The risk involved would increase in such instances where, on an intermediate term basis, the proportionate share of the draftees with respect to the overall strength of the German Federal Armed Forces would be drastically reduced. This would result in affording the people less of an insight into the internal state of affairs of the German Federal Armed Forces, and, ultimately, in the German Federal Armed Forces themselves possible leading a more individualized life of their own.

o Third and finally, rightwing extremists, in isolated instances, purposely utilize the German Federal Armed Forces to avail themselves of military training which is free of charge, and--in exchange--are willing to put aside any ideological reservations.¹⁴ Frequently, the rightwing extremist background of someone performing basic military service is not known

to the particular unit where he is assigned, even if extensive information might be on file regarding this person with the government intelligence authorities. The insistence upon protecting the privacy of individuals is rated higher--with political considerations being the motivating factor--than security concerns of the forces. In some instances, which can be substantiated, this has resulted in rightwing extremists receiving instruction--in addition to the customary gunnery training--in how to handle explosives within the scope of their engineer training. Furthermore, there are indications that it is particularly some militant neo-Nazis who utilize their term of duty with the German Federal Armed Forces to "make off with" weapons, ammunition, and explosives.¹⁵

In addition--taking into account the existing political background of the media scene in the Federal Republic of Germany--any rightwing extremist, and any incident which occurs in the German Federal Armed Forces that shows rightwing extremist tendencies, offer a welcome opportunity to accuse the German Federal Armed Forces of permitting a revival of fascism and rightist traditions. This constitutes an attempt to force the armed forces against the rightwing extremist wall again and again.¹⁶

In summarizing, it should be pointed out that the proportionate share of identified rightwing extremists is extremely low when compared to the overall personnel strength of the armed forces. Its magnitude is similar to that found in other comparable areas of the civil service. This is all the more remarkable if one considers that in the Federal Republic of Germany the armed forces are viewed as being conservative and that rightwing organizations recruit their new members predominantly from this portion of the political spectrum. Another factor carrying a great deal of significance is that both

leading national parties in the Federal Republic of Germany possess conservative wings, even if they vary distinctly in scope.

After years of stagnation, rightwing extremist organizations scored a membership growth of 14 percent in 1987--a trend which continued in 1988, and appears to persist also in 1989. One must not disregard the absolute number, however, which--pursuant to the Report on the Protection of the Constitution--amounts to approximately 25,200 persons for 1989.¹⁷ What must be taken into account is the fact that membership in certain parties and organizations which have been classified as being anticonstitutional might, in some instances, entail considerable disadvantages for the individual members, particularly for persons applying for positions in the civil service, and/or their dependents. Consequently, I proceed on the assumption that the actual number of rightwing extremists in the civil service is substantially higher than can be shown by membership statistics. This should also apply to the German Federal Armed Forces. Isolated incidents which occurred within the German Federal Armed Forces support this assumption. They are displays of definite rightwing extremist tendencies for which armed forces' members assumed responsibility and which did not belong to any political organization.¹⁸

Leftwing Extremism

Orthodox Communism

The orthodox communists hold the view that the Federal Republic of Germany is being ruled by monopolistic capitalism, and "moneyed" capitalism, the so-called "national-monopoly capitalism." Within this scope the "Military-Industrial Complex" exerts a dominating influence.¹⁹

Externally, they claim, this brings about dependence, suppression and exploitation of the developing countries as a consequence of an expansive,

imperialistic economic policy, and must, therefore, be considered some form of neocolonialism. Internally, they maintain, it has an impact through emergency legislation, security legislation--as, for instance, the Law on the Protection of the Constitution--, protection-of-privacy legislation, and other forms of "increasing restrictions on the liberty of the individual." Here, the German Federal Armed Forces, they assert, constitute one instrument of this militarism.²⁰

Orthodox communists, among other things, pursue the objective to render the Federal Republic of Germany "capable of peace," and to enforce a "peace-oriented social developmental type" (socialism) in which the power of "militarism" is repressed, and the "Military-Industrial Complex" is eliminated.²¹

This is accomplished within the scope of the "antimilitaristic struggle" which, lately, is also being called a "peace struggle" that is being waged against the government as a whole, and its institutions, and particularly against the instruments it used to preserve its power. This is illustrated in the draft prepared by the German Communist Party which is called "Federal Republic of Germany 2000":

The progressing internal militarization of our country must be terminated and abolished. Thus, all of the laws and regulations on which civilian authorities and individual citizens rely, over and above the statutory draft, to prepare for war must be repealed. The emergency legislation must be rescinded. All restrictions with respect to the right to must be eliminated. The fact that the Federal Republic of Germany has expressly waived the right to nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction must be specifically laid down in the Basic Law.²²

Within the German Federal Armed Forces, the "peace struggle" of orthodox communists was and is, essentially, carried out by members of the "Socialist German Youth Labor Party" (SGYLP). The communist leaders did come to realize

during the course of a number of years that schemes within the armed forces had very little prospect of success. That is to say, young soldiers could not be convinced to accept the "democratic views" of the communists.

Even though SGYLP officials had founded the so-called "Working Groups for Democratic Soldiers"; issued a publication called "At Ease"; initiated numerous so-called "Soldiers' Peace Initiatives"; and often attempted to exert their influence as elected "ombudsmen," they encountered very little response on the part of soldiers.

Yet, the SGYLP chairman, Ms. Radow, appealed to everyone:

. the large majority of young males signs up with the federal government, 200,000 per year--that is where they are supposed to get drilled, and "cut down to size," where they are supposed to get indoctrinated with anti-Communist "foe images." Therefore, it is important that active unionists, "peace partisans," young socialists join the federal government. We impress upon the SGYLP members: do take a job with the government, do represent the interests of your fellow members, do join any peace initiatives of other soldiers, unionist working groups of soldiers and working groups for democratic soldiers.²³

In contrast to this appeal now there are indications that young party members prefer conscientious object or status, and that this is even supported by the party leadership. Presumably, a final decision regarding the party's position on the draft will be reached during the upcoming SGYLP National Convention.

The policy controversy within the German Communist Party (GCP), which was touched off by the reform movements in the USSR noticeably has paralyzed its capacity to take action. This paralysis also has had a considerable impact on the communist youth organization, i.e., SGYLP, and it can no longer be excluded that it might either be split, or even dissolved.²⁴ This desolate state has resulted in a substantial reduction of membership with the number of members having dripped almost by half, and the current membership presumably

being about 7,500.²⁵ As a consequence of the fact that, as outlined above, the party has changed its position with respect to service in the armed forces, this also has resulted in a marked decline of orthodox communists in the armed forces. In past years, as many as 19 "Working Groups for Democratic Soldiers" existed which simultaneously were involved in activities within the German Federal Armed Forces. The last one of these "Working Groups" has disappeared from the scene this year for lack of attendance. The military publication "At Ease," as mentioned earlier, was distributed for the last time in 1988. This can also be understood as a clear indication of the drop of orthodox-communist activities in the armed forces.²⁶

Orthodox Communists were much more successful in their activities in those instances where they have formed "action units" with legal organizations outside of the German Federal Armed Forces. There, their efforts are directed against the defense policy of the German Federal Armed Forces and of NATO. The nucleus of the German Communist Party has not cut back on its activities even though the membership--according to the latest findings of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution--has shrunk to about 35,000 members. Additionally, a so-called "policy controversy" has arisen as a consequence of the developments in the USSR. There, party members have adopted varying positions in this respect leading to a great deal of internal dispute within the German Communist Party.²⁷

According to information made available in 1987 by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany helped the German Communist Party by providing approximately DM (German Marks) 65,000,000.²⁸

They attempted to exert massive political influence, as scientists, unionists, members of the legal profession, and journalists, on the formation

of public opinion within the Federal Republic of Germany. Here, the "action unit" within the leftist party spectrum--also called an "anti-Fascist, antimonopolistic alliance"--is found propagating the matters of:

- o fighter aircraft 1990;
- o low altitude flights;
- o modernization of the short-range missiles;
- o extension of military service;
- o relationship to NATO/USA; and
- o cutbacks in the defense budget.

There is hardly any difference in the views held by members of leftwing extremist organizations and parties and those who make their political home in parties and organizations which are based on the "left," but conform to the constitution, and are considered democratic. Through continuous propaganda efforts initiated by orthodox Communists, covered by a democratic "cloak," and carried out under the veil of "action units"--the German Federal Armed Forces have been shown to be, in the minds of many citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany as part of the "aggressive instrument of power." Thus, a partial objective on the way toward a "peace-oriented Federal Republic of Germany" has been attained. It also has become "opportune" to question the role of the German Federal Armed Forces, and its entire defense preparedness.

Conducting an "antimilitaristic struggle" within the armed forces has not yielded any appreciable success for the orthodox Communists. However, members of SGYLP undergoing basic military training within the armed forces, managed--in repeated instances--to be elected ombudsmen. What could not be accomplished,²⁹ with respect to the rightwing extremist area, was to win actual multipliers--i.e., military superiors, instructors at universities of the German Federal Armed Forces and the like. Two hundred twenty-nine

leftwing extremists identified in 1987 as employed within the civil service of the Federal Republic of Germany consisted of 126 who worked for the German Federal Postal Service, 53 who worked for the German Federal Railway and the rest for other agencies, mostly holding subordinate positions.³⁰ There was not one single orthodox Communist--exclusive of draftees--who was identified within the German Federal Armed Forces in 1988. In February 1988, the number of members of the German Federal Armed Forces integrated in orthodox-Communist organizations, to exclude draftees, amounted to 13.³²

We may proceed on the assumption that the "antimilitaristic struggle" of the future will take place "in the country." Communists and other leftwing extremists propagate the regionalization of the so-called "peace struggle." In place of nationwide mass rallies, action groups are to be formed in the country to appeal to the public, and have a topical reference. In the final analysis, what the destination of this "journey" is supposed to be was expressed rather fittingly by Jochen Lange, the (non-Communist) publisher of the magazine "MOP" (Armed Forces, Ecology, and Planning). He wrote concerning the "Possibilities and Difficulties of Local Defense":

It is particularly for this reason that the concept of communalization of "peace politics" makes it possible to "apply leverage" at the very lowest echelon of militarization, namely where the conservative forest ranger wants to prevent the new tank road together with the conscientious objector. If, then, the time has come where the pacifistic "port of destination," i.e., abolishment of the military, might come into view, and the forest ranger then decides to "get out," then there is still time enough to hold "exquisite" discussions on the subject. Today's slogan is: "let's join forces!"³³

"The New Left"

Parties and organizations of the "new Left" have in common that they are not patterned on Moscow. They can be divided into two camps: "revolutionary Marxists," and the anarchists. Just like the Moscow oriented, orthodox

Communists, the organizations of the "new Left" pursue the objective of overthrowing the existing system of government and social order, Marxist oriented groups strive for a Communist social order, while the anarchists aspire to a society "with no masters."

Within the armed forces, political extremism--to the extent that it originated with the forces of the "new Left"--has not been detectable for years. This is clearly apparent because the number of "soldiers' groups" of the "new Left" has dropped. Also, there are hardly any instances where subversive literature is displayed in German Federal Armed Forces accommodations.³⁴ The "easing-off" of the antimilitaristic efforts" within the German Federal Armed Forces was accomplished in parallel with the downfall of the revolutionary dogmatic Marxists within the "new Left." What exerted a decisive influence was the development which the "Communist League of West Germany" underwent, a party that, after years of internal struggles in the "wings," finally dissolved of its own accord in February 1985.

From the beginning of the 80's until the present, the agitatorial power held by followers of the "new Left" in the German Federal Armed Forces shrank to the point of insignificance. The last "soldiers' group" of the dogmatic "new Left" at the Regensburg Garrison--guided by the "Laborers' Alliance for the Reorganization of the Communist Party of Germany"--discontinued its activities in 1987.³⁵

What has not slowed down, however, are the efforts on the part of the "new Left" to exercise an agitatorial influence on soldiers from outside the German Federal Armed Forces, or to commit violence-oriented acts directed against defense installations and facilities. The weakening of the dogmatic "new Left" was compensated for by the participation of the undogmatic spectrum of the "new Left" such as anarchists and autonomous persons.

The latter, in all instances, traditionally exercised an influence on the German Federal Armed Forces from outside since they have, at all times, avoided an actual contact with the armed forces (what is meant here is performance of the basic military service) whenever possible: for antiauthoritarian considerations, they therefore aspired to being recognized as conscientious objectors.

Today, the "antimilitaristic battle" which is being fought by the "new Left" from outside against the German Federal Armed Forces finds its expression in two different forms of appearance. First "direct actions" at a particular location, and second, agitation/propaganda through publications. Thus, the "Federation of Violence-Free Action Groups" (FVFAG) considering occupations, blockades, sabotage, and other damage to property "violence-free" called for "interference" actions against NATO's headquarters exercise, Wintex-Cimex, in February 1987.

Even though there are about 70 action groups in existence nationwide, participation by approximately 400 to 500 persons as viewed by FVFAG³⁶ was disappointingly poor. Activities of the "new Left" against the German Federal Armed Forces, and NATO have consisted of:

- o interference with maneuvers of military units;
- o disruptions of the Wintex/Cimex exercises;
- o actions directed against exhibitions of the German Federal Armed Forces;
- o blockades and demonstrations at various projects under construction for NATO (command headquarters);
- o Obstructing of railroad traffic when U.S. ammunition and other military transports are being conducted;

- o damage to road demolition shaft installations; and
- o scribbling of graffiti on the walls of official buildings of the German Federal Armed Forces accessible to the public.

The number of interference actions "triggered" by various groupings of the "new Left" such as blockades, disruptions and the like directed against the German Federal Armed Forces is in the two-digit range. There were about 80 in 1986, about 60 in 1987, and about 85 in 1988.³⁷ On an annual basis active cooperation with the orthodox Communists who were otherwise looked down upon by the "new Left," resulted in several hundred actions. A pronounced decline could be noted with respect to interference actions directed against foreign NATO forces, and particularly against military installations of the United States. While there were still 528 such actions in 1987, there were only 252 in 1988, with the United States armed forces at their missile base locations being "hit particularly hard." In all probability³⁸ this over 50 percent decline in the number of actions can be attributed to the general political developments. The disarmament agreements either already concluded, or aspired to in the minds of many sympathizers of the "new Left," make such actions appear superfluous, and entail consequences for the mobilization of its followers.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The number of identified extremists in the German Federal Armed Forces--when compared to the overall strength of the armed forces for years--has been very low. In the Federal Republic of Germany, membership in leftwing extremist parties is more than twice that of rightwing extremists. This fact is not reflected within the German Federal Armed Forces. Starting in 1986 the proportional share of rightwing extremists clearly exceeds that of leftwing extremists, a trend which continues to prevail in 1989. This, on the one hand, is a consequence of the increased number of rightwing extremists which also has an effect in the German Federal Armed Forces. On the other hand, the changed attitude of the orthodox Communists with respect to performing military service in the armed forces also has made its influence felt.

Activities perpetrated by extremists within the German Federal Armed Forces can only be observed in isolated instances, with very limited or no success at all. Leftwing extremist, with very rare exceptions, perform military service in the armed forces as draftees, while rightwing extremists include individuals who serve as senior officers. Under the provisions of the applicable official duty regulations, it is very difficult to remove extremists from active duty who cannot be proven to have committed anticonstitutional activities. In the future evidence indicates that the armed forces will continue to be "weighted toward the right." This does not take away from the fact that, in the foreseeable future, political extremism of any kind does not have a chance to gain ground in the armed forces.

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